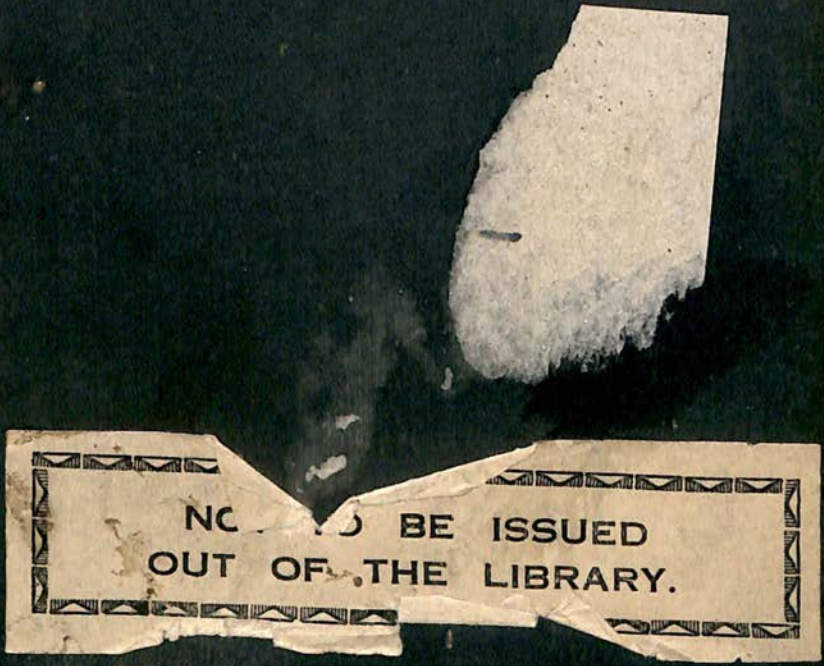

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SHERE ALI KHAN, THE AMEER.

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CABUL

OR

AFGHANISTAN

The Seat of the Anglo-Russian Question

BEING

A PAMPHLET OF FACTS ABOUT THE COUNTRY THE AMEER AND THE PEOPLE

WITH A MAP OF THE COUNTRY

(SHOWING ROUTES OF ADVANCE AND PASSES)

FROM THE CASPIAN SEA TO THE INDUS

AND FROM THE RUSSIAN LINES BEYOND THE OXUS

TO THE PERSIAN GULF.

BY

PHIL ROBINSON

83761

W. e. 47

London:

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NOTE.

pilation of this kind, it is hardly necessary to say that the compiler has gladly utilized in his work all the material he could find to his hand that was at once authoritative and well written —whether in the columns of the Press or in books. The only authors quoted are acknowledged masters of the subject—Rawlinson, Vambery, Bellew, Elphinstone, Ferrier, and Schuyler. The map may be safely accepted as correct, and all distances accurately calculated from the scale given. It combines the latest data of the Indian Frontier Survey publications and of the most recent maps of Central Asia.

P. R.

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CABUL,

OR,

AFGHANISTAN.

APART from its present political aspect the kingdom of the Ameer of Cabul, Shere Ali Khan, is full of interest for the student as the theatre of Arab conquest and Islamite growth, the scene of Tartar invasion and havoc, a very hotbed of Mohammedan bigotry and fanaticism, the arena of Shia and Sunni hostility, the battle-field of Afghans and Persians, the scene of British conquests and disasters; and as if nature had designed it to be the object of the world's attention, Afghanistan stands uplifted from the great plains of India and the Khanates upon the shoulders of the great mountain ranges that bound it on the north-east and east. The mountains of the Hindu Kūsh tower up on its eastern frontier as a landmark to all Asia, and point out to every invader the way to India. From the great range irregular spurs diverge in every direction, and cover Afghanistan with a net-

[1] Pronounced as "Kawbal" (*not* Kabool), and Afghán-ĭ-stán.

work of mountain chains. Between them lie valleys of surpassing fertility, and watered by perennial streams. Here every enemy of India has recruited his forces, and more than once the hardy mountaineers have themselves poured through the passes of the Suleimān range that separates Afghanistan from India, to ravage the territories of the infidels of Hindustan. Known to the world generally by the name of Afghanistan, or country of the Afghans, it is not so designated by the Afghans themselves, although the name is not unknown to them. By the Afghans their country is usually called "Wilayat" (hence the term "Wilayati," often applied to its people by the natives of Hindustan) or native country. It is also distinguished by two appellations, including different portions of territory, viz.: "Kābul," or "Kābulistān," which includes all that mountainous district north of Ghuzni and the Safed[2] Koh, as far as the Hindû Kûsh, limited towards the west by the Huzārah country (the ancient Paropamisus), and eastward by the Abba-Sin, or "Father of Rivers," the Indus; and "Khorāssān," or "Kābulistān," which includes all that extensive track of country, Alpine in its Eastern limits, and table-land or desert in its western extent, which stretches

[2] Pronounced as Sufaid.

southward and westward from about the latitude of Ghuzni, and borders on the confines of Persia, from which, towards the south, it is separated by the desert of Seistân. A glance at the map will acquaint the reader with the boundaries of the kingdom.

The main features of Afghanistan, which measures about 430 miles from east to west, and 460 miles from south to north, are the mountain chains, the general direction of which is east and west, but which throw out buttresses to the north and south. Afghanistan is traversed across the centre, from east to west, by the Hindû-Kûsh, or more properly the Hindû-Koh, ending in the Koh-i-Baba, a huge mass north-west of and at no great distance from the city of Cabul. It is covered with perpetual snow, and its loftiest peak is nearly 18,000 feet high. Thence run two parallel chains, one called the Safed Koh, or "white mountain;" the other—the southernmost one—the Siah Koh, or "black mountain." These mountains are of no great height. North of the Koh-i-Baba and the Safed Koh is a high plateau, intersected by minor ranges, and called the Huzara district. Running in a south-west direction from Cabul, past Candahar to Girishk, is another chain of mountains.

The Safed Koh deserves a separate reference;

for, should the project of invasion, as announced, be executed, and a force enter Afghanistan by way of Thal and the Kūrum river, the Safed Koh will do duty as an effectual barrier against any attempt from the north to disturb the advancing column, for it covers the line of advance up to the turning point of the Kūrum river, whence, by the regular road, both Ghuzni and the town of Cabul may be commanded. The high ground about Ghuzni forms the water-shed for the drainage of both divisions of Afghanistan. All to the north of this site flows northward to the Cabul river, and ultimately reaches the stream of the Indus. But all to the south of it flows southward and westward, and is either lost in the sands that prevail in these directions, or else, joining the rivers Tarnak and Argandub, ultimately reaches the lake of Seistân. Two streams only flow south-eastward toward the Indus. Of these the Gomal is lost in the soil, soon after leaving the hills it drains, and the Kūrum reaches the Indus near Isa-Khail.

Towards the west, watering the table-land of Candahar and Herat, are the several rivers flowing into the lake of Seistân. Of these the Halmand is the largest, and before reaching the lake it receives the united streams of the Tarnak and Argandab, and, farther on, the Khāsh-rūd. During the summer

months all these streams, with the exception, perhaps, of the river Halmand, become almost completely dry. In Cabul the rivers are more numerous for the extent of surface than in Khorassan, and are of greater volume, though of less extent. The principal are the streams of Logar, Khasgar, and Swat, which, joining the Cabul river in different parts of its course, add their waters to those of the Indus at Attock. Of these the Logar and the Kashgar streams (the latter with its tributaries draining the hills of Kafiristan) are fordable at most seasons throughout their course. But the Swat and Cabul rivers are only fordable with ease during the earlier part of their course.

Though seen now in the lowest depth of its poverty, the kingdom of the Ameer has a past history of some grandeur, and the vast architectural remains that heap many of its valleys and strew its plains bear witness to a prosperous age that has gone. Thus, from Ghuzni westward, all along the valleys of the Tarnak and the Halmund, down to the basin of Seistan, the whole country is covered with the ruins of former towns, obliterated canals, and deserted cultivation, the sad memories of the Tartar devastations under Chengiz Khan and Timour in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is, however, the last word of

those who have studied its resources that Afghanistan requires only a settled government to regain all its past power and wealth. Its mineral resources are great; gold, silver, iron, and lead are among the indigenous metals, and salt, saltpetre, sulphur, and antimony abound. In vegetable products it is notoriously rich, for here the flora of the East and West meet as on neutral ground. Besides all the Indian cereals and the hundred varieties of the melon and cucumber kinds known to Asia, the castor-oil, tobacco, cotton, madder, and other valuable economic plants of the East, there are found the fruits and flowers of Europe also. The olive, mulberry, oak, cedar, walnut, and pine flourish, with all our orchard trees and garden shrubs. English vegetables are in every bazaar, and in the country side the rose, jessamine, and hyacinth grow wild. A complete catalogue would almost exhaust botany; but sufficient varieties have already been cited to denote the vast range of the vegetable world of Cabul. From this may be inferred corresponding variety of climate. Though lying between the 29th and 35th degrees of latitude, Afghanistan, taken as a whole, escapes, by its elevation, the heat that should characterize it. The temperature is further modified locally by the presence on the one side of the snow-

clad Hindu Kūsh, and on the other of barren sand tracts. The periodical winds sweeping over the one bring a sharp, bracing air; over the other come the dry, parching blasts so well known in the East. Thus, the plain of Jellālabad during summer is intolerably hot; while to the south the Safed Koh lifts up its snowy peaks, and to the west lies the table land of Cabul, enjoying the coolness and verdure of a temperate climate. At Candahar the temperature in summer is excessive. At Cabul itself the winter is more severe than in England, while in summer the heat is greater. The inhabitants, therefore, wear at one time clothes of felt, with cloaks of sheepskin, sleeping at night under rugs before a fire; and at another thin chintz or muslin robes, and have their beds out under the trees. The climate is, however, colder than that of Afghanistan generally, but is very regular. There are three months of the winter, three of spring, three of summer, and three of autumn. During the winter, which sets in about the beginning of December, the town is regularly blockaded by the snow, which completely blocks up the streets, so that business is at a standstill.

Of the industrial products of Afghanistan little can be said, for the Afghans are not a manufacturing

people. The few manufactures they have merely suffice for their ordinary wants.

The animals of Afghanistan are the horse, camel, and sheep. The first are largely exported into India, and for the most part come from the countries on the west of Afghanistan. Of late years, however, large numbers have been bred in Afghanistan, expressly for the Indian market, and the breed is becoming greatly improved owing to the care and judicious breeding.

As a race, there are few to compare in physique and energy of character with the Afghans proper—for the country is peopled by an infinite diversity of races. The Tajik, of Persian origin, and the Huzara, the residue of Tartar invasion, Usbegs and Turkomans of various tribes, Kuzzilbash Moguls, and a bewildering variety of Hindi and Kashmiri colonists, all combine to form the population, while southward, but still subjects of the Ameer of Cabul, are the Brahoes and Beluchis, descended from different stocks, and speaking different languages, and a medley of emigrant communities from Hindustan and Persia.

It should be remembered that Afghanistan never has had, and never can have the cohesion and consistency of a regular monarchical government.

The nation consists of a mere collection of tribes, held together more or less closely, according to the character of their chief. The feeling of patriotism cannot exist, for there is no common country. Indeed, there is no ethnical reason why Herat and Candahar should be attached to Cabul.

The hill tribes of Huzara for instance are not at all or little under the control of the Cabul Government, and though they acknowledge the ruling king there as head of their nation, they would, in case of invasion or attack from without, rush as readily to the standard of their own chiefs in the hope of local plunder as to the standard of the king for the protection of their country. In times of peace they withdraw to their own highland homes and independence. The total population has never been accurately calculated, and while some authorities fix it much lower, others estimate it at about nine millions. A great variety of races contribute to the total, but the most numerous and most important in every way are the Afghans proper. They number nearly four millions. Their language proves, on analysis, one of the most interesting known to philologists, for its roots strike equally into Hebrew, Sanscrit, Asiatic, and Persian, with a large admixture of words derived from no

known source. It is called Pushtu, and is almost entirely a spoken language, the character being Arabic, with only very slight modifications to express particular sounds which in the spoken language have no corresponding sound in any other Oriental tongue. From the presence of Hebrew derivatives in their speech, and of Hebrew ceremonies in their customs, it has long been surmised that they were of Jewish degree. They style themselves Bani Israel, or children of Israel, affect to trace their descent from Saul, the king of Israel, and preserve among their traditions, amongst a medley of Mohammedan doctrines, the accounts of the deliverance of Egypt, the ark of the covenant, and the names of the Philistines, Amalek, Anak, and others. Be this as it may, history first recognizes the existence of the tribes called "Afghans," when they were settled at Ghor, in Western Khorassan, in the eighth century, and after becoming subject in turn to Delhi, and to Persia, they attained to independence by the daring of Ahmed Shah, an Afghan, who on the death of Nadir Shah, the King of Persia, seized the vast treasure which the Persian army was carrying home from the plunder of India, and proclaiming himself King of the Afghans, readily united under him all the tribes of that name, and established within its present limits the independent kingdom over

which Shere Ali Khan now rules. Between the dates of Ahmed Shah and Shere Ali Khan a hundred and forty years have elapsed, marked throughout by violent internal dissensions, resulting in frequent changes of dynasty or frontier. The most important was the overthrow of the Suddozai family in 1839, inasmuch as it led to British interference. Under the impression that the restoration of the Suddozai dynasty would be pleasing to the Afghans, the British Government attempted the restoration of the deposed Ameer, Shah Shuja, hoping also, by thus constituting a friendly power in Afghanistan, to obtain a permanent guarantee against the intrigues of Russia, then threatening to occupy Khiva and disturb the Indian Frontier.

It is quite true that the most awful disaster that ever befell the British army was one result of the first occupation of Cabul: the tale was written large in blood on the mountains of the country. But it is no less true that, on the instant of the receipt of news a cry of fierce wrath broke from our countrymen in India; and, swift as tigers, an Army of Vengeance dashed upon the murderers' den. The British infantry rushed into the Khyber Pass, and, scaling its cliffs, swept out the mountaineers from crevice and ravine, while the main body, breaking down the barricades with which, in their impotent malignity, the hill-

men had crowded the Pass, hurried on toward the devoted city. The Ghilzais tried to oppose the avenging force at the Jugdullah defile, but were hurled back upon the main army encamped at Jugdeen. In five days more, General Pollock was upon them in their strength. He inflicted a shattering defeat, and then swept down on Cabul; and the ruins in the capital of the Ameer bear eloquent witness to this day of the completeness of our triumph and our retribution. It has been forgotten by some that to enact that splendid vengeance, the British army had to march through the Punjab—not then a British province, but a possession of a disaffected, if not actually hostile government—and through the Khyber Pass, while it was still swarming with the very same men that a few months before had made such easy prey of the blocked mass of fugitives, and were still exulting in the successful carnage. To-day, however, the circumstances are altogether changed and in our favour. The Punjab is peacefully in our possession, and affords us some of the finest soldiers in the world, the Sikhs, who hate the Afghans with a traditional hatred, and would prefer them to any other enemy. More than this, the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, has, with a wise foresight, subsidized the Pass-men, who, while serving us, become, by that very fact, the enemies of the Afghans and their Ameer.

This enmity, however, is no new thing, for, interwoven in the early history of the country, are the feuds between the mountaineers of the Pass and the Afghans proper, feuds arising from the contemptuous refusal of the latter to recognize the former as clansmen of equal dignity of descent with themselves. Not only, therefore, are both the Punjab and the Pass friendly to us, but the Punjabis, and the Pass-men have grudges to pay off against the Afghans.

It is to be noted that the advance of Generals Pollock and Nott was made in the month of September.

Moreover, the Afghan war of 1839 was undertaken in an impulsive moment with little forethought and less afterthought. Our chief ally, Runjeet Sing, died immediately after its commencement, and the real hostility of the Sikhs did not remain long concealed. The prince whom we championed was singularly incompetent, and the prince who opposed us was remarkably able. There was no danger from Russia, and the Afghans therefore had full power of action. Yet with all these drawbacks, added to the non-existence of an Indus Valley Railway, and to the absence of an advantageous base in Khelat, we conquered Afghanistan with a mere handful of soldiers, chiefly natives. The Afghans after the

storming of Ghuzni never stood for a day against our troops.

To return to the people, in their government and customs, they resemble other Mohammedan nations, but though proud of their devotion to Islam, they do not hesitate to break all its laws when their inclinations prompt them. In one respect notably, their large consumption of intoxicating liquors, they habitually transgress their creed. In character, the Afghan is bigoted and revengeful. His treachery is proverbial in the East, and hardly less notorious is his readiness to join in plunder or murder. Without being brave, in the sense that the long-enduring Sikh and patient Ghoorka are brave, he possesses a certain dashing boldness, which the first reverse dissipates; and, though boastful in promises, is avaricious and mean in performance. His code of hospitality illustrates this trait. So long as the guest is under his roof, the Afghan will treat him as a brother, and all the delicacies that the women in his harem can prepare—and every Afghan woman is a skilled cook—are at his service. But the moment that the stranger has got a gunshot off, his whilom host, if he should have taken a fancy to his apparel, or suspected the possession of money, will as cheerfully send a bullet into his back as the day

before he had lighted his pipe for him. By nature, and in many parts of the country by profession, robbers and banditti, the smallest pretext suffices to excitè them to deeds of blood, and in their tribal and religious jealousies such pretexts are always at hand. As Sunnis they hold in detestation the adverse sect of Shias, and this difference of doctrine is at all times enough to justify plunder and murder, while from the many varieties of races living among and near them, excellent reasons for desolating a homestead, or killing a traveller, are never wanting. It is sufficient excuse to an Afghan for firing his long-barrelled jizail at a stranger that the latter wears his turban differently to himself—and is not looking. The turban is in Afghanistan what the tartan was in the Highlands of Scotland, for each clan has its distinctive pattern of cloth and often a peculiar method of wearing it. These clans are very numerous, but group themselves roughly into nomad and agricultural communities. The former are found chiefly in the wilder country of the Khorasan, where a more ample pasture is found than in the north, and where they can wander with their herds at will. Nominally, of course, they are under the government of the Ameer, but virtually they are retainers of their own chiefs, through whom they

pay their tribute to the central authority, and who have complete control over the mutual relations for peace or war of the various tribes. They contribute a contingent to the regular army, and form the bulk of the reserve militia. The main portion of the regular army is drawn from the agricultural class; and, except as a soldier or a cultivator, the Afghan in his own country has no occupation open to him. Whether from vanity or from traditional antipathy to useful labour, he refuses to follow any trade, and history gives ample precedents to justify us in referring to this trait of character, the fact that the Afghans are the ruling race. In personal appearance few nations in the world can compare with these subjects of the Ameer. Travellers agree in describing both the men and women as remarkably handsome, fair complexioned, and with dignified, aquiline features. In figure they are almost invariably well-proportioned, tall, and muscular. With such advantages it is not strange that the Afghan is passionately addicted to all exercises that call for athletic limbs, sound lungs, and tough sinews. Hunting and hawking are national amusements, and all kinds of sport are popular. As horsemen they will compare with any races in India, or with ourselves; while as marksmen, whether with the

rifle, spear, or stone, they are remarkably proficient. With such tastes and pursuits heartiness in conviviality is generally found associated; but the Afghans, in their boisterous debauchery, distort this amiable trait into bestiality of the vilest description. This is especially the case among the higher classes; for the bulk of the people are unable from their excessive poverty to indulge their tastes. As an evening amusement chess finds favour with every grade; but, in common with all Orientals, the Afghan prefers to listen to a story-teller to doing anything else. The interminable nature of Eastern tales, which go on from night to night, branching off from the original narrative at every opportunity into the adventures of other characters that happen to be introduced, would be maddening to a European audience; but the Afghan, patient in this alone, lies on his sheepskin hour after hour quite content if some one in the company will only drone out the involved labyrinth of indecent episodes that he calls a tale.

The women are fair-complexioned, handsome, and of a good figure. They enhance their charms by all the artifices of cosmetics, dyes, and picturesque dress; and tatooing with indigo, takes the place of the patches once worn in England. The hair, worn in

long plaits, is often adorned with tassels and rough but effective ornaments of metal or glass; but the jealous seclusion in which the better classes are kept by their lords and masters, has prevented travellers from obtaining details of personal appearance.

"The secluded and idle life they are forced to lead within the religiously guarded 'haram,' influences their moral character very injuriously; and since they know they are not trusted, they do not care to gain the confidence of their masters. Intrigues are consequently of common occurrence, though, on discovery the parties are most severely punished, usually with death. Yet the accomplishment of their forbidden desires is often the daily occupation of the inmates of many a 'haram,' and the licentiousness of the men and their neglect of their wives tends to increase the frequency of such 'liaisons,' and affords opportunities for their concealment." [3]

The men sometimes dye their hands and feet with "henna" (the leaves of the Lawsonia enermis), and also apply "surma" (powdered antimony) or "kohl" (lampblack), to the edges of the eyelids. These personal embellishments, however, belong more properly to the women, and are only practised by those of the sterner sex who live in towns and cities, and

[3] *Bellew.*

even among them the habit is by no means general. Those who adopt it are considered fops and effeminate. But among the women these arts of the toilet are universally observed. The women also are generally more or less tattooed permanently with indigo. A few dots are usually punctured on the chin, and on the forehead at the root of the nose. Frequently a few are marked on the skin between the breasts, and in the same manner rings are marked on the fingers, wrists and arms. The complexion of the women of the better classes is very fair, and sometimes even rosy, though usually a pale, sallow colour prevails. The features are generally handsome, and like those of the men have a Jewish cast, and their fascinating glances are enhanced by the use of the surma and kohl above mentioned. These substances impart to the eyes a peculiar charm and captivating lustre, mixed with a spark of "diablerie" when their owner is animated, which are considered essentials in the qualities of a beautiful woman, and objects of admiration to the other sex generally.

Next to the Afghans, the Tajiks of Persian origin are the most numerous class of the Ameer's subjects. Physically, they rival the Afghans in graces of persons, but differ from them widely in character and habits. As a rule they are an orderly and law-

abiding race, and though as ignorant and superstitious as their neighbours, are less turbulent and bigoted. In the rural districts they follow agriculture as a profession, and in towns occupy themselves in any trade or industry. A considerable number join the army, in which they are known as Toorks, and not a few are to be found serving in the Punjab branch of the British force. Among the remaining elements of the population of Afghanistan, the Kazzilbash Moghul and the Huzara tribes deserve special notice. The former are of Turki origin, and wherever they go enjoy the reputation of being splendid soldiers. In the irregular cavalry of India, one of the finest arms of any service, they are marked men, and in Afghanistan they form the bulk of the cavalry and artillery forces in the Ameer's service. The Huzaras are of Tartar descent, as their unprepossessing features and diminutive stature abundantly testify. They serve the other races as menials, and, as such, are looked upon as faithful and docile. In independence, however, they display a remarkable hatred of the Afghans, who, owing to the savage daring shown by these mountaineers, have never been able to pierce to the strongholds.

Brief as are these sketches of the chief races of Afghanistan they suffice to show how the population

contains within itself all the elements of intestine discord and none of cohesion in a common cause. The Sunni Afghans at a word would turn in the name of religion upon the Shia Moghuls; while the Huzaras, and besides them the Hindu tribes scattered about the country would readily, in the hope of plunder, fight against both.

The Afghans, in fact, are incapable of resisting a European invasion, whether it come from Khokand or the Punjab. They could contribute very materially to the defence of their Fatherland, if it be undertaken by a firm ally. They can, for instance, enable England to defend the line of the Oxus, and Balkh, or Badakshan, or they could perform the same service to Russia, garrisoning Cabul or Ghuzni. They exercise the two enormous advantages of being on the spot, and of knowing the country. But it cannot be denied, that this is the utmost Cabul can do, and that we have too persistently exaggerated the difficulties of occupying Afghanistan ourselves.

In their government and laws the Afghans are guided by the precepts and ordinances of the Mohammedan religion and Koran codes. The priesthood are the expositors, and, in most cases also, the administrators of the law. The king

governs the country by the aid of provincial governors, who are responsible to him for the revenues of the provinces under their respective charge, and also for the efficiency of the military forces under their command. The surplus revenues, after defraying the expenses of the government, are added to the imperial treasury, which is for the support of the royal family, and is entirely at the disposal of the king. These provincial governors generally, and more particularly those at a distance from Cabul, oppress the people for their own aggrandizement, and often defy the authority of the king, and assert their own independence. This is especially the case with that portion of the nation occupying the mountain barriers of the kingdom. Few of these tribes pay revenue to the Cabul government without coercion, and the difficulties attending its collection are so great that they are, for the most part, left alone for many years together, or until the imperial exchequer requires replenishing, and opportunity offers, when a force is marched to the refractory district, and by fair means or foul, makes up the arrears of revenue by a general plunder of its inhabitants.

At the seat of government the king is assisted by his "Wazīr," or prime minister; the "Mir Munshī," or secretary of state; and the "Kāzī,"

or chief judge and priest, who superintends the department of law and religion. The details are transacted by his "Nāib," or deputy, assisted by the "Mufti" for law, and the "Sheik" or "Imam" for religion. All the officials connected with these departments are comprehensively styled "'Ulama" or Doctors of the Law.

The military forces of Afghanistan consist of a regular standing army and of a militia. The former comprises some seventeen or eighteen regiments of infantry, dressed, drilled, and equipped in imitation —a sorry one though it be—of the British army, whose cast-off and condemned clothing they buy up on the frontier stations of India and adopt as their uniform—a proof of the prestige that the British red-coat still maintains in their country. Besides these, there are three or four regiments of light dragoons got up after the same model; also a small force of artillery, with perhaps a total of 100 pieces of cannon, chiefly of brass, and home-made. The Afghans have, however, a few iron guns; but they are very old and rusty, and probably as dangerous to themselves as to their enemies. The army is supposed to be under the direct command-in-chief of the king; but the regimental commands are distributed among the princes of the blood and the governors of the different provinces into which the

country is divided, without respect to their military qualifications or capacities for command. The internal economy of the regiments is carried on by the commandant, styled "Komédān," and is in accordance with his own ideas on the subject, and he is assisted by a body of commissioned and non-commissioned officers, who are sometimes selected by merit, though, as a rule, they get their appointments through interest as blood-relations or as slaves, or else as partisans of the chief in command. The arms and uniforms of the soldiers are provided by Government, at a fixed price, which is deducted from their pay. The arms, like the uniform, are for the most part derived from the British. They are the old flint-lock musket or smooth-bore percussion guns.[1] These last, however, are little used, as the Afghans have not yet succeeded in manufacturing caps for them, and can depend but upon a very small supply from the British. Of late years they have turned out a number of two-grooved rifles and carbines both at Cabul and Candahar, on the pattern of those used by the frontier corps of the British Indian army; but as before noted there is a difficulty in the supply of percussion caps for them.

[1] It must not be forgotten that we have given the Ameer about 20,000 rifles, Enfield and Snider, with ammunition; and also a field battery of guns.

The pay of the regular army is for the most part settled by a cash payment; in many cases grants of rent-free lands are made instead. On these reside the families of the soldiery, or else the lands are hired out by them to farmers. The infantry is for the most part composed of true Afghans of various tribes, though amongst them are many Tajiks and a few Persians. The latter, and the Tartars, are mainly found in the ranks of the cavalry and artillery forces, of which, indeed, they constitute the bulk; whilst in the ranks of the three divisions of the army are to be found many Hindostanes who have deserted from the ranks of the British Indian army.

The militia force is a very numerous body, the numbers of which it is very difficult to ascertain. But in case of foreign invasion it would include almost the entire male population between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Their arms are the "jazail," or long Afghan rifle; the sword, or, in its stead, the "chārah," or Afghan knife, and the shield. The yeomanry division of this force, though sometimes they carry the rifle, are, as a rule, only armed with the lance, sword, and pistols, or the blunderbuss with bell-shaped muzzle.

The militia are supposed to owe allegiance to the king, and, in case of need, to protect him and the country from foreign invasion. In truth, however,

they are under the direct control and command of the chiefs of their respective tribes, whose interests are identical with their own, and under whose standards accordingly they range themselves as feudatories. Indeed, the composition of this force is very anomalous. As a mass they are little, if at all, under the control of the king or his government, and are moreover divided amongst themselves according to the opposing interests of their different tribes and clans. The militia provide their own arms, and receive no pay except when on active service for the State. Their tribal chiefs, however, receive grants of rent-free lands in their respective territories by way of military fief.

From the foregoing particulars it will be noted that the Afghan army is an armed, and for the most part undisciplined mass, with divided and often conflicting interests, and, consequently, not at all times to be depended on for its fidelity to the king or his government. Indeed from the fact of their being more or less under the control of their own tribal chiefs (who, themselves, are mere feudatories of the king—sometimes supporting, and at others resisting his authority), they look to them as their real masters, and accordingly, espouse their cause, whatever it may be. It is owing to this power of the various tribal chiefs that they are so often refractory

—so jealous of each other, and so constantly intriguing for ascendancy in the councils or government of the country. And this is moreover the main cause of the weakness of the Cabul government, for its authority does not extend much beyond the capital and the adjacent provinces, unless backed by troops to enforce compliance.

Such, in brief, are some of the peculiarities of the armed forces of Afghanistan. "As a military power they are contemptible (at least at the present day) anywhere but on their own hills. Even the Kaffirs —a savage race inhabiting the southern slopes of the Hindû Kûsh, and whose only weapons are the bow and arrow, stones, and the dagger—have, times without number, proved a formidable foe, and, in truth, more than a match for the Afghans, as those of this race whom the Afghans own as valued and faithful slaves, they have acquired not by their superiority in fair fight, but by base treachery and intrigue."[5]

The Ameer and his Family.—It is now fifteen years ago since Shere Ali Khan, dashing at Candahar to punish the rebel chiefs who had disputed his succession to the throne, sank in the hour of victory into an abyss of grief, counting as nothing his brilliant military success since it cost him his

[5] *Bellew.*

first-born—the heir to his throne. The gallant youth, Mahomed Ali Khan, had sought out the leader of the rebels in single combat, and after a fierce fight in which he three times wounded his antagonist, was shot dead, and his father, in the extremity of his sorrow, abandoned his army and his kingdom to their fate, refusing for several days to see even a human face. Three sons, it is true, still remained to him, but so completely had his affections been centered in the one that was gone, that he could not look on either of the others as his successor. A fourth son was in time born, and to him, the child of a favourite wife, he gave both his heart and throne. The one gift has already more than once nearly cost him the other, for the disinherited sons some seven years ago almost shook the sceptre from his hand by their successful revolt. But death has now removed the object of their envy. Abdullah Jan, the son of the Ameer's favourite wife, the daughter of the Meer Afzul Khan, governor of Furrah, was proclaimed heir-apparent in 1873, and to secure his succession his father imprisoned one son and drove a second into exile. But "fate" has proved too powerful for the Ameer.

It is a picturesque history this that closed at the grave of the Ameer's favourite son. His brave mother, a lady of the noble Barakzai stock, had

worked well in her husband's cause when that cause seemed desperate, and Shere Ali was a wanderer in his own kingdom; for it was she who kept the camp supplied with money, and the dethroned ruler well-informed of the movements of the enemy and the intrigues of the court. When, therefore, Shere Ali returned in triumph to his capital she claimed as her reward the elevation of her son to the throne, and the promise then given in 1869 was performed in 1873. At the great festival of the Eed, and in the presence of all the Moslem city, the Ameer solemnly placed in the hands of the lad, Abdullah Jan, the Koran and the sword which his father, Dost Mahomed, had in the same way placed in his, as the insignia of heirship, some thirty years before. Three years later his health began to fail, he became subject to fevers and rheumatic attacks, and to these causes, perhaps, is due the death which a month ago turned the eyes of Asia to the capital of Afghanistan. Not less picturesque is the story of the Ameer's own life, and the lessons to be drawn from it are such as should have warned Shere Ali against disregarding claims of succession.

The Ameer Dost Mahomed died in 1863 at Herat after subduing that revolted province, and left many sons, the most notable in history being Mahomed Afzul Khan and Mahomed Azim

Khan, sons by an elder wife, and Shere Ali Khan, son by a younger and favourite wife. By the law of primogeniture Afzul Khan should have succeeded, but Shere Ali had been declared by his father, during his lifetime heir-apparent, and so on the death of Dost Mahomed a strife at once commenced for the throne; but, after the manner of Eastern royal houses, the struggle was not confined to the principals concerned, for every scion of the dynasty struck a blow for individual independence; one in Turkistan, another in Kurrum, a third in Candahar, and a fourth in Furrah and Girishk—the four outlying provinces subordinate to the Cabul Ameer. Shere Ali, himself, on ascending the throne complicated the embroglio by again subverting the natural order of succession, for he appointed as governor of the lately acquired territory of Herat his youngest son, Yakub Khan. But the disaffected chiefs, concerting combined action, and aided by the ruler of Bokhara, lying on the northern frontier of Afghanistan, raised the standard of revolt simultaneously in every province.

Obstinate ill-fortune followed Shere Ali's arms; and at last Afzul Khan was proclaimed under a royal salute Ameer of Afghanistan. The new ruler, however, alienated the affections of his subjects who once more cast their eyes towards the exiled Shere

Ali. But the fortunes of war were still against the ex-Ameer, who suffered in person a decisive defeat in January, 1867, while his general, after gaining two victories, was finally defeated in September. Afzul Khan died at Cabul in October, and Azim Khan, at the head of a victorious army, formally assumed the throne of Afghanistan. Shere Ali was at this time in Turkistan, and his son Yakub Khan at Herat, and against these the new ruler now directed his army. But Shere Ali, waiting till Abdul Rahman was well into Turkistan, slipped past him into Cabul, and while the Turkistan chiefs kept the enemy occupied, he despatched Yakub Khan against Candahar. That gallant soldier defeated the forces opposed to him, and then Shere Ali, leaving his son Ibrahim Khan at Herat, marched upon Candahar, which he entered in triumph in June, 1868; and a successful intrigue soon after leading to the mutiny of the army at Cabul, the capital also declared for Shere Ali, who thus in September re-entered Cabul as Ameer.

To succeed Shere Ali in that dignity there are three claimants. The first, in point of strength of claim, is Ahmed Ali, the son of Shere Ali s eldest son Mahomed Ali Khan, who fell in 1865, fighting so bravely on the field of Kajbaz. For his father's sake, and, perhaps, also because the child proved

himself intelligent and adventurous, Shere Ali has always shown his grandson especial favour, and as late as 1871 it appeared as if his choice were not yet made up, whether Ahmed Ali or Abdullah Jan should be declared the heir-apparent. The former, indeed, avowedly entertained hopes of the succession until the superior influence of the mother of Abdullah Jan obtained the throne for her son to his exclusion, and now that the rival is dead his hopes of heirship may with reason be revived. Ahmed Ali is described as an intelligent youth of about eighteen, with a pleasing demeanour, and fairly well educated. The mother of Abdullah Jan is said to have another son still living, but incapacitated for rule by being totally deaf and dumb.

Yakub Khan was born in the year 1849, of a noble mother. His first appearance in public life may be said to be the occasion when he detected the European beneath the disguise of the dervish, and despite the fluency and nerve of Arminius Vambéry. That was in November, 1863, when the Afghan prince appeared to the traveller, "a good-humoured, inexperienced child." Since then, whether he has retained his good humour or not, he has certainly acquired a vast experience of life's vicissitudes. His career in the history of his

country commenced very shortly after his interview with the Hungarian traveller; for in 1864 Shere Ali's brothers disputed his possession of the crown, and Yakub Khan was left in command, at the age of fifteen, of Herat, and showed himself no puppet in office, for, discovering a conspiracy against his power, he punished the guilty with a severity that astonished his council and gained him public confidence. At eighteen he was commanding a large force in the field, and it is allowed on all hands that to the lad's popularity and energy was owing the sudden revival of Shere Ali's influence, and to his dash and gallantry the return of Shere Ali to his throne. But in 1870, disgusted at his father's preference for his younger brother, he rebelled, and, by his personal favour with the people and military skill, seriously imperilled his father's tenure of power by the capture of Herat. In the very hour of success, however, he declared himself penitent and dismissed his army; but the old discontent once more overpowered him, and his father, becoming suspicious, summoned him to Cabul. Yakub Khan, having obtained Shere Ali's promise that he should not be molested, obeyed the summons and was thrown at once into prison. He is now thirty years of age, if he is alive. There is, of course,

no proof that he has been murdered in prison, nor is there any special ground for supposing that, after the manner of Eastern captives whose intelligence is deemed dangerous by the ruler, his reason has given way during his confinement; but should either event prove to have occurred, and Yakub Khan be dead or rendered imbecile by torture, there will be nothing in that to surprise the student of Afghan history in general, or of the character of Shere Ali in particular. Personally, Yakub Khan has a pleasant address, and is admitted on all hands to be the most intelligent of the Cabul princes. Of his generalship there can be only one opinion, while as an administrator he has more than once proved himself both capable and long-sighted. Haughty and revengeful, as all Afghans are, he is distinguished from the majority of his countrymen by his frankness, liberality, and enterprise. There are some who declare that Yakub Khan has loudly proclaimed his hostility to England, and Shere Ali himself endeavoured once to make him appear as a Russophile. On the other hand, he is said to have expressed in 1872 to Captain Marsh [1] very friendly sentiments towards us, and to have commenced the

[1] The Author of "A Ride through Islam."

study of English in proof of his good feelings towards our country!

The third claimant will be Abdul Rahman, the eldest son of Shere Ali's eldest brother. By birth he might, elsewhere than in Cabul, assert certain rights; but where the sceptre goes to the strongest primogeniture counts for little, while in his personal history Abdul Rahman has certainly no claims to favour. His whole life has been marked by stubborn opposition to Shere Ali, against whom he successfully excited a revolt in 1865. Having occupied Turkistan, he marched on Cabul, overthrew Shere Ali, at the battle of Shekabad, and, releasing his father Afzul Khan from prison, placed him on the throne of Cabul. But Afzul Khan's incapacity gave his brother Azim Khan supreme power, and with him Abdul Rahman quarrelled in consequence. A temporary reconciliation—during which he twice defeated Shere Ali and his generals—resulted in renewed hostilities; and when, after his father's death, Azim Khan, his uncle, assumed the title of Ameer of Cabul, he retired into Turkistan; Shere Ali, meanwhile, was recovering his power, and Abdul Rahman, finding his army melting from him, proceeded to Khiva, hoping there to secure sufficient adherents to enable him to obtain possession of

Turkistan. His movements since that date have been obscured by many rumours, and the only facts beyond all doubt are that his time is spent in alternate intrigues with the Turkomans and the Russians, and that his one object is to disturb the peace of Afghanistan. In May, 1870, he was entertained kindly by General Kauffman at Samarcand, and since that date has repeatedly asked for Russian help to assist him to conquer Afghanistan, never ceasing to beg that he might carry his case to St. Petersburg, and even boasting, with the view of increasing his personal importance with the Turkomans, that he is in the pay of the Russian government. His military abilities mark him out as a dangerous enemy in the field, but, politically and socially, his influence cannot now stand so high as when, fifteen years ago, fighting for his father, he carried with him the sympathy of the majority of the Afghans. At that date the cause of Shere Ali, as shown by his loss of his throne in the successful interpolation of two Ameers of the elder stock, was undoubtedly unpopular; and Abdul Rahman, had he struck for the throne for himself, as being the elder son of the eldest son, might have permanently displaced Shere Ali. As it is, Shere Ali has now obtained that Russian alliance and friendship which

Abdul Rahman has during all his outlawed life been striving for. But if, casting about for a successor who shall at the same time be acceptable to Russia and distasteful to England, the present Ameer should select Abdul Rahman, there would in the choice be nothing extraordinary.

Recent History : Russia on the Afghan Frontier.— The stupid catchword of "masterly inactivity" has been adopted to designate a policy of which Sir John Lawrence (in whose defence ill-informed partisans persist in quoting it) had grown heartily sick in 1867. He then advised active interference in Cabul affairs, and Sir Stafford Northcote agreeing, it was arranged to subsidize the Ameer Shere Ali. Lord Mayo arrived in January, 1869, and to him therefore it fell to carry out Lord Lawrence's active policy. He met Shere Ali at Umballa, in March, and so far acceded to the Ameer's earnest desire for an offensive and defensive treaty, as to give a written declaration that the British government "would view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of his rivals to disturb his position." This declaration Shere Ali exaggerated into acquiescence with his demands, and, contented with it, as with the royal subsidies extended to him, did not bring forward directly the question of Abdullah Jan's succession,

which, as a matter of fact, had formed, to his own mind, the special object of his visit to Lord Mayo. His satisfaction was justified by the unprecedented throng of nobles that crowded on his return to do homage to the honoured guest and presumed ally of the Viceroy of Hindustan.

On the very day of the Umballa conference, really concerted with reference to the advances of Russia, Lord Clarendon commenced the correspondence with Russia as to the limits of the Asiatic boundaries of the two powers, which after some ridiculous errors of geography owing to the use of a wrongly-coloured map, and some discussion as to a "neutral zone" between the two territories, resulted in the settlement of the Oxus as the northern boundary of Shere Ali's dominions (along two-thirds of its extent), Russia conceding to the Ameer his right to Badakshan and Wakhan,[2] and recognizing their frontiers as the

[2] Wakhan is a small territory lying north of the Hindû Kûsh, between the Chitral country and the Pamir Khanate of Shagnan. The importance of Wakhan is twofold. In the first place, it holds the southern route of the caravan trade between Eastern Turkistan and Western Turkistan, and Afghanistan. In the second place, it commands the northern entrance to the Baroghil Pass leading from Kashgar to the Chitral Valley. For both of these reasons Wakhan is of importance to this country. Regarding it from a purely his-

line of demarcation which limits her own dependencies of Khokand and Bokhara to the south. Prince Gortchakoff then formally and spontaneously declared that "Afghanistan was completely outside the sphere within which she might be called upon to exercise her influence." How far this is true need hardly to-day be pointed out.

Nor does the Czar shine as a man of honour in the next Central Asia manœuvre—the seizure of Khiva. In 1869 a Russian detachment established itself on the eastern shore of the Caspian, the Czar assuring England "for entirely commercial purposes." Reconnoitring, however, commenced at once, and military posts were extended eastward, until three years later Russia found herself strong enough to resort to

torical stand-point, Wakhan must be admitted to be a portion of the Afghan empire, although, perhaps, ethnologically, it should form one of a confederation of mountain states which should extend from Swat to Karategin. The strategical importance of Wakhan will become very clear should Russia absorb Karategin alone; but if Darwaz and Shagnan are to share the same fate then our eye will have to be constantly fixed upon the whole northern frontier from Pamir to Merv. From Wakhan, now a border province of the Chinese empire, to the Turkoman country round Merv, there stretches a broad and clearly defined zone, on which may be written at any point "high road to India."

force in her designs. Four converging columns, any one of which would have sufficed for the purpose, closed on Khiva, and the crushing terms in money and territory imposed on the conquered, destroyed the independence of the state, as well as the last shreds of respectability still hanging about the Czar's oath. More important, politically, to British India than the seizure of Khiva, is the subjugation of the Turkomans, which it has been foreseen by "the detractors of Russian honour" must follow. The truth was, that the original northern line of Russian advance (which started from the centre of the Caspian) toward the Afghan frontier (for this has been from first to last the goal of Russia) was found to be inconvenient—a vast desert intervening; another line was therefore opened, the pliability of Persia being first established beyond dispute. Starting therefore this time from the extreme south of the Caspian, the advance has been pushed eastward along the Attrek River, the northern boundary of Persia, in the direction of Merv, which is only four marches from the Oxus, and ten easy stages from Herat, "the key of Cabul." Along this route lie the populous domains of the Yomut, Goklan and Tekkeh Turkomans, aggregating over a million souls. The two former were rapidly reduced to comparative subjection, but the latter still hold out.

When they are overpowered, Russia will have free way to Merv, where, strengthening herself, she can await the moment for seizing Herat by a *coup-de-main*. The vast Türkoman contingent at her disposal, under the command of Abdul Rahman, the rebel nephew of Shere Ali, now in the Russian camp, and a leader of Turkomans from his youth up, would enable Russia to wage, at no cost to herself, an extensive unofficial war, and absolutely control both Cabûl and Persia.[3]

Successive annexations since the invasion of Khiva in 1873, with the virtual mediatization of Bokhara, have given Russia the choice of three routes to the neighbourhood of Afghanistan. She commands a road by Charjui to Merv, and thence to Herat, a second by Karkhi to Andchui, and a

[3] The *Indian Weekly Review* makes, with reference to the Russian movements, the following original and sagacious comment:—"There is another point to be considered, which is, that it would be hardly worth the while of the Russians to go some 250 miles out of their way to Herat in order to turn the Bamian while a tolerably direct route exists from Balkh or from Khlum lying just south of the ferries to Cabul. Moreover, a move by Herat or to Herat would at once rouse England to its centre; whereas in the case of Balkh or Khulm, although absolutely nearer to our frontier, the names of the places are unknown to the majority of Englishmen at home, and the danger might not be seen until the seizure had been accomplished."

third by Khoja Salih to Balkh and the Bamian Pass. The steamboat service on Lake Aral and the Oxus would co-operate in conveying supplies. As far as the Hindû Kûsh the course of a Russian army is fairly open. The short line that already exists between Poti and Tiflis forms a ready base for further extensions, and the true importance of Batoum is as a suitable terminus for a railway to Erivan, Tabriz, and Teheran. The great scheme of the line beyond Orenburg may be considered as permanently shelved. But railways from Erivan, through Azerbijan, Ghilan, Mazanderan, and Khorassan are not open to any momentous objections, while they cannot fail to be both politically and strategically of the highest importance. We may pass over the Orenburg-Khiva-Merv line to Herat as purely visionary, and we may ignore also the scheme for connecting Samarcand with Cabul; but it would not be prudent to remain equally indifferent to the third proposed line that is to pass from Erivan to Teheran, and thence to Herat.

At the present time it is incontestable that a scheme for a railway from Teheran to Herat receives additional significance from the fact that the Russian envoy to Cabul was said to have instructions to demand "the right to station Russian

agencies in the north-west of Afghanistan, and to visit Herat and the neighbourhood;" whither, for all we know to the contrary, he may have gone ere this.

In January, 1873, the agent of the Ameer visited Lord Northbrook at Simla, and it soon became apparent that the Ameer was then a very different individual from the Ameer of 1869. His four years of unchallenged rule had relieved him from all apprehension of rivals, and had made him proud and self-reliant. It had also given him an insight into foreign politics, which rendered him not only extravagant in his demands, but stubborn in pressing those demands, and sullen when they were negatived. He had, in fact, learned that in England there was a party which deprecated all action in defence of British interests. Accordingly, in spite of the splendid liberality with which he was treated—for he received 120,000*l.* and 15,000 rifles, Enfields and Sniders—he sulked, refused at first to take our subsidies, ordered the British mission under Forsyth, returning from Kashgar, out of his territories, and otherwise demeaned himself as a beggar proverbially does when placed in the saddle. He opened a treasonable correspondence with the Russians and commented in his letters to General

Kauffman contemptuously on British procedure. The veneer of the Mayo memory had worn off. Shere Ali began to remember that he had ancient grudges against us, and he catalogued them and shouted them out. He had gone mad, for the gods had resolved upon his ruin. "I have seven crores[4] of rupees by me, every rupee of which I will hurl at the head of the British government; and I will roll the border tribes against them like blasts of fire."

The Ameer's "Grievances."—When Dost Mahomed, the father of the present Ameer, died in 1863, Lord Lawrence recognized Shere Ali as his successor. The throne, however, was soon shaken under him, and two usurpers in succession ruled in Cabul, Shere Ali being meanwhile an exile in Turkistan, and Lord Lawrence recognized first one and then the other as Ameer. Shere Ali, thanks to his son, Yakub Khan, regained the throne, and though he in his turn was again hailed as Ameer by the Indian Government, he had not forgotten that an equally ready recognition had strengthened his two predecessors against him. Indeed, the remembrance of that pitiful policy was so vivid in the Ameer's mind in 1869, when he visited Lord Mayo at Umballa, that he did not hesitate to

[4] £700,000.

speak bitterly of it to the Viceroy. This was his first grievance against us. But Lord Mayo won the Afghan's heart by the royal welcome and entertainment that was extended to him, and Shere Ali returned home pleased for the time, if not contented. But the first question asked of him on his arrival at Cabul was, "Did the Indian government recognize Abdullah Jan as your heir?" and Shere Ali had to confess that the chief object of his visit to Umballa had not been attained—that, indeed, he had not even seriously broached the subject of the heirship at the Durbar. The diplomacy that had thus baffled him Shere Ali in time grew to look upon as a personal wrong, and in his formal catalogue of grievances against the Indian government it stands second on the list.

Five others find a prominent place, namely, the despatch of an embassy direct to the Mir of Wakhan instead of through himself as that chief's suzerain; the mediation of Lord Northbrook for Yakub Khan when he was imprisoned by his father; the Seistan arbitration, when that province, in dispute between Cabul and Persia, was adjudged to the latter; the hearing refused to his complaints at the Peshawur Conference in 1876; and the occupation of Quetta. A few words will illustrate the validity or

the reverse of each of these "grievances." The mission to Wakhan was undoubtedly a breach of international etiquette, a Political Office blunder, and Shere Ali was justified in his complaint. The mediation in favour of Yakub Khan was without the province of the Indian government, and, therefore, as all unnecessary interference in the private affairs of foreign potentates must be considered, ill-advised. Lord Northbrook, by implication reproached the Ameer for imprisoning the son to whom he owed his throne, but the Russian general then on the Cabul frontier congratulated him upon having got under lock and key so dangerous a rebel. "You are not a kind and grateful father," said the one. "You are a wise ruler," said the other. And Shere Ali, comparing the two together—for both letters arrived in Cabul within a few hours of each other—found the Russian congratulation more to his taste than the English admonition. On the next point, the Seistan arbitration, it can only be said that the matter before the Commission was a very delicate one, and that they decided as they thought right. That many were found at the time, and many since, to quarrel with the award, does not strengthen Shere Ali in his attitude of discontent at the results of an arbitration to which he had

voluntarily referred his claims. The next "grievance" of the Peshawur Conference has been fairly stated by Sir Lewis Pelly himself. The negotiations, he tells us, came at once to a dead-lock, because, on the British side, a preliminary discussion of the Ameer's complaints against us could not be agreed to, and, on the Afghan, because Shere Ali's representative would not listen to our preliminary condition for future friendship—the presence of a British official at the Cabul court. His last grievance on the list, the occupation of Quetta, cannot be entertained as a cause of complaint. Shere Ali himself agreed to that occupation when in prospect, and described himself as pleased at it. Now that it is an accomplished fact, and he finds it to be a strong bit in the mouth of Cabul, the Ameer protests. But the time for protest has passed. When the two countries were on friendly terms any opposition from him would have been received with deference; but now that the immense strategic value of the position has been made prominent by the rupture of those friendly relations, objection to our presence at Quetta must be futile. To understand our position here, it is necessary to refer briefly to the frontier of British India and the changes it has undergone.

The present Indian frontier on the north-west, that

is to say, in its most comprehensive extent, from Ladakh, on the borders of the Chinese empire, to the Arabian Sea, is for the most part defined by mountain ranges. There is the Karakoram range, north of Cashmere, the Suleiman, west of Pesahwur and Bunnoo, and the Khirthar, west of Scinde. The frontier of Cashmere is satisfactory for defensive purpose, for the Indus supplements the great range of mountains. From Torbola to Dera Ghazi Khan our frontier may be defined as an irregular line drawn at the base of the Suleiman and Safed Koh mountains, backed by the river Indus, at a distance varying from ten miles to fifty. Along that frontier there are many important posts, Peshawur, Kohat, Bunnoo, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan being the chief, and each of these posts is to all intents and purposes dependent upon its own resources, quite detached from our centres of power, and have, moreover, in their rear the Indus, which is often two, and sometimes three rivers. Even Dera Ghazi Khan, the best off of these places, can only preserve communications with Mûltan, its base, and a station on the Indus Valley Railway, under difficult and uncertain conditions, for both the Indus and the Chenab intervene. The difficulties of maintaining communications across the Indus are

immense; and it is only at Sukkur, where the Indus Valley Railway crosses the river, that they have been successfully coped with.

In history and in common talk the Indus is called the western boundary of our Indian empire. But history lags, and people talking together prefer metaphor to exact fact. "From the Indus to the Bay of Bengal" is a comprehensive, convenient, and symmetrical phrase; but our fate in India—the fate that forbids the conqueror to cease from conquest—has now carried us beyond the great river. When we struck empire from the hand of the Lion of the Punjab, the great Sikh chieftain Runjeet Singh, our frontier outposts reddened the spurs of the Suleiman range far beyond the Indus; and when, tardily exasperated, we drove the Ameers of Sindh from their capitals, the border line was again carried westward through their principality to the marches of Beluchistan. Yet once again we have had to step forward, westward, and this time into the very heart of the Beluchis country—to Quetta.

This advance was necessitated by the treachery of Shere Ali, which five years ago was suspected, and three years ago assured. The Peshawur conferences was the last chance offered to Shere Ali to recover his lost ground; but he rejected it. Sir Lewis

Pelly had it in his gift to make the Ameer both strong and rich; but the Ameer had lost his reason, so the Indian government, careful of the coming storm, occupied Quetta, and assured themselves of possession of the succession of ravines or gorges, gradually ascending from east to west, known as the Bolan Pass. In the days of his friendship with us Shere Ali had agreed to that step, expressed himself pleased at it; but to-day he would give much if he could only drive the red line back from Quetta to the Indus, and shut the postern that lays his capital open to our advance and his power at our feet.

Quetta, it must be here premised, does not belong to Cabul, but to Khelat; and we are permitted by treaty with the Khan "to station troops in any part of the territory of Khelat as may be thought advisable by the British authorities."

Quetta to Candahar.—From Quetta to Candahar the advance would meet with few obstacles if the inhabitants were well disposed. The valley northwards, looking from Quetta, is overshadowed by the Zarghun range infested by the Kakarr tribe, the most hardy mountaineers of a country where all are hardy, and hopelessly lawless. Other freebooting clans again make unsafe for travellers, and even caravans, the direct road to Candahar; but to an

armed force could offer little molestation. These tribes muster in all some 7000 households, but they are scattered over so wide an area that when recently their suzerain, the Khan of Khelat, organized a punitive expedition against them, no trouble was found in reducing them in detail to submission. In December snow falls, and often after that the road, though never impassable, is difficult. The Murghi Pass leads by an easy route down to the Peshin district, and at Kushlac, fourteen miles from Quetta, a small stream of that name is passed, which demarcates the frontier of Khelat and Cabul. Another eighteen miles of practicable road brings the traveller by the Surmaghazi Pass to Hykalzai, situated on a plain of red clay soil—a favourite rendezvous of the nomad Tarins, and marked by numerous ruins and several inhabited villages. From Hykalzai, a march of fifteen miles attains Aranbi Kariz, several streams being crossed *en route*, and a fair sprinkling of inhabitants encountered.

Excellent roadway obtains thence past the spurs of the Toba range, the populous villages of the Dihsuri Glen, to the Khojak Pass, at all times practicable in spite of its narrowness. On the southern side the elevation has been recorded to be 7000 feet, at the top of the pass 7410, and at

Chaokah, on the northern end, 5600, and here, as everywhere else along the road, pasture is abundant for three-fourths of the year. From Chaokah to Chaman, and thence to Gatai, some twenty-five miles, the route lies north-westerly along a gradual slope on to the undulating sweep of the plain; and from Gatai a march of fourteen miles reaches Mel Mandah, the road lying across a plain and rolling downs, without inhabitants, as pasturage is very scanty, and the water brackish. After eighteen miles further Maku Karez is made; the Barghana Pass, which lies midway at an elevation of 4100 feet presenting no difficulty to the traveller. Thence a winding ravine leads to the village of Maku, and sixteen miles further, across an undulating plain as far as the Arghesan river (a very shallow stream, though of considerable width), lies Mund Hissar. From here to Kandahar is twelve miles. The whole route, it will be seen, is as easy as an invading army has any right to expect, and from end to end water and pasturage abound, while in the numerous flocks of sheep that are driven into the district to graze an abundant source of meat is at hand. The only apprehension, therefore, is from the inhabitants themselves; but from the well-established popularity of the British at Quetta, and the general friendliness

of the Beluchis towards us, there seems no ground for suspecting interference with the advance.

General Sir Henry Green writes,—

"There is no position on the whole length of the frontier of India better suited to maintain such a guarantee to defend Afghanistan than is Quetta. In this position, commanding the entrance to the Bolan Pass, in a friendly country, surrounded by friendly tribes, a British force could assemble, backed by the resources of England and of India, in a climate favourable to the European constitution, and from this position it could act either upon the offensive or defensive."

The advance of Sir John Keane into Afghanistan in 1839 was effected by the Bolan Pass. It was the refusal of Runjeet Singh to fulfil his promise of preparing the way for an easy advance of the British army through the Sikh country to Cabul which finally led to the selection of Shikarpur, in Scinde, as the principal rendezvous of our forces, and the determination to approach the Afghan capital by the more circuitous way of the Bolan, Quetta, and Candahar —the Ameers of Sindh, more complaisant than the ruler of the Punjab, having promised to provide supplies and means of conveyance. The difficulties encountered by the Bengal column under Sir Wil-

loughby Cotton, consisting of 9500 men and the enormous number of 80,000 camp followers, were rather of a physical than a military kind. The Bolan Pass is sixty-six miles in length, winding, rugged, and flanked by high rocks, its width gradually narrowing from three miles to about 150 feet, and forage and water being entirely wanting. When the column reached Dadur, at the foot of the mountains, on the 6th of March, provisions were already so short that the camp followers were put on half-rations. Nevertheless, the troops reached Quetta, after enduring great privations. At Quetta the troops, failing to find the supplies they expected, were compelled to push forward in a famished condition to Candahar, distant 150 miles, which place they reached on the 26th of April, having marched 1000 miles since leaving Ferozepûr. The Bombay column, with Shah Shoojah's contingent, which entered the pass on the 12th of April, encountered still greater fatigues and privations, and suffered, moreover, some harassment from the predatory tribes which infest the ranges of hills in that district. No serious opposition, however, was encountered from the Afghans.

Candahar is an important town in every sense, especially from a strategical point of view; for

through it passes the best line of communication between Cabul and Herat. It is also the capital of Southern Afghanistan, and whoever holds the city in force is master of the whole of that part of the country. Candahar is on the site of an ancient city, conjectured to have been founded by Alexander the Great, and named Alexandria, whence the old name Iskandria, and the present Candahar, founded by Ahmed Shah, in 1747. It was the seat of government till 1774, when Cabul became the capital. The city is large and populous, containing, it is supposed, about 150,000 inhabitants, chiefly Afghans. In general form it is oblong, and planned very regularly, four main streets, each fifty yards wide, meeting in the centre, (where is a domed market,) and leading to the four gates.

Entering by the "Cabul Gate," the traveller traverses a long and tortuous line of narrow and filthy lanes, which converge on the Shahi Bazaar, or Royal Market, and parade-ground, beyond which and occupying the northern quarter of the city, is the Arg, or Citadel. Passing out of the "Herat Gate," the visitor finds himself in the summer gardens of the former rulers of Candahar and the ruins of the old city, which cover a great extent of surface along the base and slope of a high ridge of

bare rock that rises on the plain about four miles west of the present city. In the suburbs are many gardens and vineyards producing various grapes of fine kinds and great variety of fruits; the peaches, figs, mulberries, and pomegranates being of especial excellence. The military force in garrison at Candahar is always considerable. The city is well watered by canals from a tributary of the Halmand river, and a small aqueduct runs along each of the main streets.

Candahar to Herat.—The road for the first sixteen miles from Candahar is bad, owing to the numerous unbridged streams and watercourses which it crosses. The next two days' marches to Girishk the road passes over a stony desert, in which water is scarcely to be procured. Girishk is an important point on the road for the Halmand, which in the beginning of May is 100 yards broad and three-and-a-half feet deep, and can only be forded at that town. When the river floods at the beginning of June, it is computed to be about a mile broad. The left or southern is higher than the right or northern bank. The country in the neighbourhood is fertile, but the road then crosses a sterile plain, or rather plateau. The next day's march water is to be obtained. At Dilaram, water, forage, and food are scarce. The

road then passes through a stony valley, but level and good, with the drawback, however, that little water is to be obtained. Furreh on the Furreh road or river, is but a heap of ruins, with little cultivation in the neighbourhood. The river is dry three-quarters of the year; but at the beginning of summer it is about 200 yards wide. Between Furreh and Subzewar there are no villages, the country passed through being a jumble of valleys and hills, with small plains inhabited by nomads. It is almost needless to say that provisions are scarce. On leaving Subzemar the road traverses a valley well cultivated and covered by large flocks and herds. The road itself is good. Through the chain of mountains intervening between Subzewar and Herat the road is very rough, and between the mouth of the pass and Herat the country is a perfect desert of hills and ruins, and water is scarcely to be obtained.

Herat itself possesses natural advantages of quite exceptional importance. It is the frontier town between Persia and India, and is connected by high roads with the capitals of all the surrounding countries; with Cabul through the Hazara hills; with Balkh and Bokhara through Maimena; with Khiva through Merv; with Meshed; with Yezd and

Ispahan; with Seistan, and with Candahar. It enjoys an admirable climate, and is situated in the midst of one of the most fertile and populous valleys in Asia. Above all the city itself is surrounded by earthworks of the most colossal description, dating from prehistoric times, and which, with the adaptations and improvements of modern science, might be rendered quite impregnable to an Asiatic force.

Candahar to Ghuzni.—As the reverse route is given in detail on pages 59—63, it is sufficient to state here that the road is eminently practicable, and was traversed by Sir John Keane and General Nott, and others, with very little opposition.

Sir John Keane set out on the 1st of July from Candahar, which had surrendered without a struggle, for Ghuzni, 230 miles distant. Ghuzni was taken by storm—the citadel being captured after a desperate combat of three hours' duration. The force employed on our side in the operation amounted to 4363 fighting men of all ranks. This was the final struggle of the campaign of 1839, for Dost Mahomed, on receipt of the news of the fall of Ghuzni, abandoned his throne, and fled for refuge beyond the Oxus.

Thal to Candahar viâ Ghuzni and Khilat-i-Ghilzai.—Thal (or Thull), which has acquired importance as a strategic point, is situated about midway between the frontier outposts of Kohat and Bannu. It commands the entrance to the Kurum Valley. The following *precis* of the march of the Mission of 1857 from Thal to Kandahar enumerates the different stages, and describes the country traversed.

Starting from Thul, they found themselves traversing a ravine-scored valley in which innumerable sounders of wild pig found covert. Next day the river had to be forded, and the current was then (in March) very rapid. For twenty miles of difficult and rocky road no inhabitants or animal life, hardly any vegetation was encountered; but, approaching Boghzai, the travellers found a hamlet of good size, in which every male went fully armed. From Boghzai to Saddah, thirteen miles, a succession of corn-fields and orchards occupied the banks of the Kurum, loopholed huts peeping out from among the fruit-trees. The next sixteen miles to Killa-i-Kurum (the fort of Kurum) lay through similar scenes, many of the villages having a compact fort-like appearance, and being armed with *chevaux de frise* of thorns along their walls. The fort of Kurum is

[6] Or Thal-biland-Khail.

described as of large extent, possessing eight bastions, each surmounted by a round tower, and the whole surrounded with a moat crossed by drawbridges with covered ways. Here the Mission was halted for four days, not to enjoy the extraordinary natural beauties of the spot, but to give time for certain murderous banditti, who had occupied the road with the object of intercepting the travellers, to move off. As they refused to do so, the Mission had to alter its route so as to avoid the obstruction.

From the fort the travellers advanced through the valley, here from eighteen to twenty miles in width, and crowded with orchards and cornfields, interspersed as usual with embattled villages, and, as usual also, inhabited by lawless tribes. The next halt was at Habib Killa (sixteen miles), situated at the foot of the Sita Ram peak of the Safed Koh. During the halt rumours got afloat that the Jaji tribe had mustered in force on the other side of the hill and meant mischief. The Mission, however, apprehended no danger, and started, but were soon stopped by a band of fifty men, brandishing wildly the formidable Afghan knives they carried, and chanting a war song. As if to make a murderous attack upon the Mission, they leapt forward to within a few yards, but the escort dashed forward, interposing themselves between the uplifted weapons,

and the Jajis quietly allowed the cavalcade to file by unmolested. The next instant two black bears, startled from their lair by the noise, came out upon the path, and one of the party fired. The bears were doomed in any case, for the escort soon cut them down with their swords; but the shot, misconstrued by the savage Jajis as a taunt, resulted in a camp follower who had lagged behind being hacked to pieces. Though the atrocious act was committed in full sight of the baggage escort, punishment was impossible, for the Jajis leapt away, over and among the rocks, with the speed of monkeys, and disappeared from sight as suddenly as they had come. Another illustration of the exceptional savagery of the tribe is afforded by the nature of their huts. These are square structures of stone and mud, erected on log platforms, and profusely loophooled. The entrance is from beneath, by a trap-door and rope ladder, which is drawn up when the inmate is housed. When neighbouring families are at feud, they keep such a vigilant eye on each other's "shooting boxes" that not unfrequently they are shut up mutually for weeks together.

Towards the Mission they continued obstinately hostile, and at Ali Khail [6] a tragedy seemed imminent, for an army of 5000 Jajis, under the leader-

[6] 18 miles from Habib Killa.

ship of an Akundzada ("wiseborn," a term applied only to those most revered for piety or learning), had assembled to dispute the passage of the defiles. A council was held, and it was decided to send for succour to the Kurum Fort and to Cabul, but for the latter journey no one would volunteer. The short cut to the capital would have taken a swift horseman four days, while the population was eminently dangerous, and the mountain passes, from the heavy snow still lying, frequently impracticable. Negotiations were, therefore, opened, and the Jajis eventually calmed down.

From Ali Khail to Hazra (26 miles), through a noble game country, as the many horns of ibex and markhor testified, and so on by the "Defile of the Thousand Trees" to the outpost of Katta Sang, the boundary between the Jaji and Ghilzai territories. From here to Hazra or Ucha Murgha, forage and food were for the first time scarce, but the horses ate freely the wild wormwood which was growing in profusion. And then the Mission passed on over "the Camel's Neck" into the beautiful valley of Logar, where the stream sparkled with the bright hues of the porphyry, hornblende, and syenite that formed its bed, and the village of Khushi, or "All Delights" (20 m. from Hazra), lies buried in meadows and orchards. Thence to Hisa-

rak (10 m.), along a district of extraordinary plenty and thickly populated—to Tangi Wardak (18 m.), down through the Tangi defile, to Haidar Khail (12 m.)—a village notorious, even in Afghanistan, for the audacity and skill of its robber folk. Next Swara (15 m.), and then by the gorge of "the Lion's Mouth," and past the tomb of the Sultan Mahmud (22 m.), to Ghuzni.

The fortress which was blown up by Lord Keane in 1842 had been rebuilt, a formidable-looking place with a citadel at the north angle in a commanding situation, and containing some four thousand houses.

From Ghuzni the route lay across a treeless expanse of plain to Yarghatti (18 m.), and thence to Mukkar (42 m.). Over a grassy plain, along which caravans were winding to Gholjen (12 m.), the site of the slaughter of the Ghilzais by Nadir Shah, and thence to Momin Killa (14 m.) and Sir-i-Asp, where an escort from the Governor of Khilat-i-Ghilzai (45 m. from Momin Killa) met the Mission and conducted it into the city. From Khilat-i-Ghilzai to Jaddak, thirteen miles; Jaddak to Shalar-i-Safa, twenty-eight; to Khail-i-Akhun, fourteen; to Mahmand Killa, twelve; to Candahar, ten miles.

Peshawur to Cabul.—It may be considered toler-

ably certain that in an actual invasion a column would enter Afghanistan by the Khyber Pass. The road is quite practicable for all arms, and provisions are to be obtained almost everywhere along the route. Water also is abundant. The mouth of the pass is about twenty miles from Peshawur,[1] and midway stands the fort of Jumrood, erected by Runjeet Singh, and now memorable as the scene of the repulse of the British Mission. There are two entrances within a short distance of each other;

[1] H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, on the 22nd January, 1876, knocked in the last rivet of the railway bridge over the river Chenab, and now it is in working order well towards Attock on the Indus. Attock, on the Indus, is a large fort, commanding the passage of the river, and would become a place of great importance in case of an invasion by the Khyber. The size of the present fort, and numerous towers, tells how important it has been considered by its former possessors. Except in the rainy season there is a bridge of boats at this place, when the river rises, and a ferry only can take men or baggage across. Peshawur is then, in a military sense, cut off from its base. The difficulty will soon cease to exist, for a railway bridge will in a short time be completed, and the Indus will then be no longer a source of anxiety in the event of operations taking place on the frontier. It is about twenty miles from Attock to Peshawur, and the road follows along the right bank of the Cabul river. Peshawur itself is on a slightly rising ground with a plain extending on the north and east.

one, the main entrance, is called the Shader Bhagiaree, the other the Jubogee. The former is the shorter, being only five miles from the fort of Ali Musjid; the latter, which joins the main pass near that fort, is twice as long. From the mouth of the pass by the main road to its end at Dhaka is about twenty-six miles. From Dakka to Jellalabad is about four marches, or about forty miles. The Khoord Cabul Pass, where General Elphinstone's army was destroyed is only about ten miles from Cabul, and is the most formidable physical obstacle to a force marching from Jellalabad on the capital. There is, however, another pass a short distance to the south, so the defenders' attention might easily be distracted.

A deep interest attaches to the advance of Sir Claude Wade through the Khyber Pass in the teeth of the opposition of its defenders. Wade's force consisted of considerable but irregular levies of Mussulman Punjabees, partly led by British officers, conjoined to a small detachment of native infantry, and accompanied by two howitzers of our native horse artillery. With this force, intended to act in concert with a corps of the Sikh army—an auxiliary which, of course, was not forthcoming until after news had been received of the British successes—General

Wade advanced from Peshawur. Attempts had been made to obtain possession of the defiles of the Khyber by corrupting the Mohmands on the left bank of the Cabul river and the Khyberi tribes in the mountain fastnesses, but those intrigues failed. Mahomed Akhbar, the eldest son of Dost Mahomed, made a resolute defence of the famous fort of Ali Musjid, which stands at a point in the pass where the valley narrows and the road follows the course of a clear mountain stream. A traveller from the Afghan side, we are told, might pass by this fort without perceiving it; but when he has followed the rivulet a short distance down he will, if he faces about, see its towers frowning from a lofty and insulated eminence and completely commanding the only approach. When the troops of the Ameer occupied this stronghold they were posted in the fort itself and on the summits of the mountains which enclose and look down upon the valley. From these Colonel Wade's troops drove them, however, by ascending the heights at distant points, and, advancing along the ridges, while the howitzers of our artillery, placed in battery in the hollow, dislodged the garrison with their shells.

Thus, driven from Ali Musjid, Mahomed Akhbar yet continued at the head of a considerable force to pre-

sent a bold front to the invaders. As the disposition of his forces was skilful, it is probable that he would have made an energetic resistance; but his intentions were frustrated by the capture of Ghuzni, which now rendered the defence of the capital the most pressing object. Accordingly, the force under Wade, finding its enemy diminished in its front, penetrated the last passes of the Khyber, and after establishing a chain of posts along the mountain route, and on the right margin of the river, advanced without further obstacle to the neighbourhood of Cabul. In brief, the passage of the dreaded Khyber had proved to Wade's army an enterprise of little difficulty; but the circumstances were obviously favourable.

The attempt of General Pollock with his army of relief to force the Khyber Pass was tedious and difficult. At the fort of Ali Musjid he experienced a severe check, and it was not until the 10th of April that he was heard of at Jellalabad as having reached the middle of the Pass. On the 14th of that month the besieged garrison received the joyful news that the difficulties of the passage were all surmounted, and that his losses in this second attempt did not exceed one officer killed, two or three wounded, and about 135 men killed and wounded. General Pollock's tactics were the same

as those of Sir Claude Wade, his successful progress being due to his system of holding the heights with his infantry before moving his guns and baggage with his cavalry. By neglecting this precaution, General Nott suffered somewhat from the shots of his watchful enemy.

The disasters of 1842 have invested the Khyber with a romantic and a gloomy interest; and it is still customary to regard it as offering an insurmountable obstacle to an invader if he disdain to purchase the goodwill of the "head men," who, as the representative of the lawless hill tribes, and recognizing no allegiance to the ruler of Cabul, had recently agreed to pass Sir Neville Chamberlain and his escort through the dreaded gorges. Experience, however, as above related, certainly does not bear out this view, though the Khyber, in the possession of a British army with due provision for its defence, would unquestionably prove a serious difficulty in the way of an army advancing from the Afghan side.

The aspect of affairs when the victorious Sir John Keane and the column under his command were returning to India by this route, gave ominous token of future troubles. The intelligence that the predatory Khyberis had attacked

an earthwork near the Ali Musjid fort, and mercilessly put to the sword 400 of its Nujeeb defenders, part of the British forces, was significant; and the occasional appearance of bands of these robbers, described as "men of dwarfish stature, and remarkable for a peculiarly wild air and mean and squalid clothing, creeping along cautiously out of point-blank range of musketry on the ridge of the mountains," rendered it advisable for the column to move in close and guarded array. Once more, however, the terrible Khyber was passed by a British army without any serious impediment.

The disasters which subsequently befell the British forces in Cabul, isolated and surrounded by hostile tribes—the assassination of Sir Alexander Burnes and Sir William Macnaghten, the convention under which Major Pottinger and Captains Laurence and Mackenzie were delivered up as hostages to Akhbar Khan, and the massacres which ensued—are matters of history. Twenty-six thousand men, women, and children fell in the rocky defiles and mountain gorges of Afghanistan, partly under the incessant harassment and murderous attacks of the Afghan troops and the wild hill tribes, but more from hunger and the deep snows and wintry blasts of that inhospitable region, five thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Of all that host only one, Dr. Brydon, made his way alive to Jellalabad, bringing the news that the army of Cabul had ceased to exist. Seven or eight only of the survivors were taken prisoners; the rest were killed. The scene of those terrible disasters, however, was not the Khyber Pass—which the retreating multitude, in fact, never reached—but the Koord-Cabul and some minor passes. The attack indeed began almost as soon as the retreat, though it was continued only in an irregular fashion; for, even famished and without hope, the British forces still fought desperately, and kept their foe, as a rule, at a respectful distance. The Koord-Cabul pass is described as five miles long, shut in on either hand by a line of lofty hills, with a torrent dashing down the centre which even the intense frost was powerless to arrest. The destruction of life at this stage was great. On the next day the retreat was continued through a defile ominously named the Dark Pass, only fifty yards long, and the Tezeen Pass, three miles long. On the 11th General Elphinstone, the commander-in-chief, fell into the hands of the enemy. On the following day they entered the terrible pass of Jugdulluk, two miles long, and very narrow and precipitous, and found the exit closed by strong barriers of prickly

holly-oak stretched across the defile. Here, with twenty muskets for their only weapons, the miserable remnant of our forces made their final stand —— "the rest was silence."

But a gallant, well-led army soon effaced the stain,[8] and the year that had opened with disaster closed with a very memorable triumph, the forcing of the Khyber and the desolation of the Ameer's capital. The history of that splendid vengeance has been often written, but it is well to-day to recall to mind the true circumstances of that splendid episode. Englishmen have been found, at this crisis, who either from shameful ignorance of a glorious passage in our military annals or no less shameful perversion of notorious facts, have, in speeches to their constituencies, declared that the lessons of the past ought to teach us cowardice in the present; and that because in January, 1842, many Christian people, and more Hindoos—men, women, and children—fell victims to the pitiless treachery of the Afghans and their allies, we are now to fear the ruler of Afghanistan.

The defence and victory of Jellalabad, under General Sale, and the capture of Ghuzni by General Nott, are other memories of this notable campaign.

[8] See p. 11.

Frontier and Mountain Passes.—The Kohat Pass is an independent strip, held by Afridi tribes, of whom the chief are the Jowaki, the Galli, and Adamkheyl. The defile is about nine miles in length, and runs nearly due north and south. In the former direction it opens on to the plain or valley of Peshawur; but towards the south it is shut off from the adjoining district of Kohat by a high hill, which closes the pass in that direction, and must be surmounted in order to emerge from the defile on to the Kohat Valley. The southern slope of this hill is held by the British, who have three round towers along its crest. Each of these shelters a party of the military police, whose duty it is to keep open the road, and preserve its safety within British limits. The eastern side of the pass is formed by a tolerably regular ridge of hill that runs from north to south. But the opposite side, though formed of the same sort of bare uninteresting looking rock, presents a very uneven outline, being formed by off-shoots from the Khyber Hills, which run eastward or in a direction across the length of the pass, the general width of which they in some places reduce to very narrow limits by their approximation to its opposite boundary. In the narrow little valleys or clefts between the hilly

ridges are the villages and fields of the Afridi tribes who hold this territory. These people are entirely independent, and acknowledge the authority neither of the Ameer of Cabul nor of the British. They are robbers by profession, and eternally at enmity among themselves or else with their neighbours. Owing to their oft-recurring feuds and quarrels, the pass, the passage through which in former times was always attended with risk of life or property, is even now sometimes closed to the traveller.

But since the establishment of British authority so close to them, its salutary influence seems in some measure to have curbed the lawless propensities of the Afridis, and the pass, as a rule, is pretty safe for travellers, except on those occasions when the tribes are "up," and then it is entirely closed (for a longer or shorter period, till terms are come to with the British authorities on the frontier), and the direct communication between the military stations of Peshawar and Kohat becomes temporarily cut off.

Through the mountain ranges that at present form the north-west frontier of India there exist innumerable passes of various degrees of practicability. The smaller of these mountain ranges, known as the Brahoe Mountains, lies just beyond the borders of

Scinde, and divides the Beluch district of Kachhi from the metropolitan State of Khelat. Kachhi was conquered from the Nawabs of Scinde by Abdullah Khan, of Khelat, in 1730, and ever since that year has formed part of the State of Beluchistan. Through this range are several passes, notably the Bholan and Mula, but there are nine others which the natives make use of in passing from Kachhi to Sarawan and Jhalawan, and the crossing of which occupies seven days. The Nagau and Bhore Passes lead to the city of Khelat direct, and are, if feasible for camel traffic, the most advantageously situated of all the Brahoe Passes. The Mula and Bholan are formed by the action of the rivers, or rather torrents, of those names, and mark respectively the southern and northern limits of this mountain range. The Mula (Muloh), or Gandava Pass, begins at a place called Pir Chatta, nine miles distant from the town of Kotri, which is ten miles south-west of Gandava. Between Pir Chatta and the next stage, Kuhan, the Mula river has to be crossed nine times. During the later stages of the journey the same stream has to be passed repeatedly, so tortuous is its course. The pass continues in a southerly direction as far as Narr, which is a cultivated spot where supplies could be obtained. At Narr a cross-road leads through

the village of Gaz, to the Beluch town of Khozdar, but the Mula Pass turns north-west in the direction of Khelat. The top of the pass is reached at the village of Angira, where the altitude is 5250 feet, but it is only for a short distance that the height exceeds 4000 feet. The great objection to the Mula Pass is its length—102 miles—and the fact that it only leads to Khelat, 103 miles south of Quetta; for otherwise it is preferable, in a military sense, to the Bholan. The average rise for the whole distance is forty-five feet in the mile. General Willshire returned by this pass after the capture of Khelat, and Mr. Masson had also travelled by it, At the present moment this pass is open, and continues so throughout the year; it is only in July and August dangerous from the floods that come during the wet season.

The Bholan Pass, of which we practically hold possession by our garrison at Quetta, and its support at Dadar, begins five miles to the north-west of the latter place. Its great advantage over the Mula is that it is only sixty miles in length, and that it leads straight to Quetta on the Afghan frontier. Its crest is 5800 feet above the sea, and its average ascent gives ninety feet to the mile. The great obstacle used to be from the Sir-i-Bholan

torrent, but that was only active during a few weeks in the wet season. In the old days this pass used to be invested by the Murris and Kakarrs, Beluch tribes; but since our occupation of Quetta there has been complete tranquility. In 1839 the army of Sir John Keane took six days to traverse it, and this must be held to have been capital marching, when we consider the vast multitude of camp followers, and the difficulties of transporting a siege-train. A light column could perform the distance in three days. It is necessary to remember in computing these distances that these passes take one far into the Afghan territory, and not, like the northern passes, only into its outskirts. Quetta is very nearly in the same longitude as Khelat in the Ghilzai country, and considerably westward of Cabul and Ghuzni.

North of the Brahoe range, but 150 miles to the east of it, comes the Suleiman. That distance is the ill-defined border between Kachhi and the Afghan provinces of Siwistan, and is held by the Murris, Bugtees, and other tribes. The Lusharees and Lugarees are their neighbours, and acknowledge in some very vague sense their Afghan nationality. Through the Suleiman range proper there are numerous passes; the Vaddor Pass from Dera Ghazi

Khan; the Sari and Sounhra Passes from Lund; the Sangarh Pass from Taunsa; the Drug Pass from Jhok Bodo; the Burkoie and Vahowa Passes from Vahowa; the Shakau and Draband Passes from Dera Ismail Khan; the Gumal or Gomul from Tak or Tank; and the Dawar from Bunnoo. Of all of these passes we know little or nothing; but their principal drawback is that they are beyond the Indus, and out of the way of our two true points of passage at Attock and Sukhur. Our knowledge of the Gomul Pass is principally derived from General Chamberlain's expedition against the Muhsoods in 1860, when the force under his command operated against those marauders in the very heart of the hill country. The most striking part of this campaign was the gallantry with which an original plan was carried out. The little army, 5000 strong, left its base of Tank, in the month of April, 1860, and pushing its way up the Zam stream, passed on boldly and steadily for the Muhsood stronghold. The force was accompanied not only by mountain guns on mules, but also by ordinary field-guns. Their village of Kot Shingee was occupied, and a surprise on our camp at Puloseen was repulsed, after some hard fighting, with heavy loss to the assailants, who left 130 dead upon the field. From Puloseen,

we marched on their capital of Kaneeghorum, which was occupied after a severe fight had taken place along the banks of the Zam. The Muhsood country surrounds the lofty pinnacle of Peerghul, and is very inaccessible to attack. The lesson read them by the present Sir Neville Chamberlain was a severe one, although it had cost us many lives and no small sum of money; and ever since the Muhsoods have not given us much trouble on a large scale, although petty acts of marauding continue. The Gomul Pass leads straight to Ghuzni, and was the principal one used by Mahmoud of Ghuzni in his numerous invasions of Hindustan; but in view of the hostility of the Muhsoods and other Waziris it may be held to be at present useless to us. It has been suggested that the Draband Pass, from Dera Ismail Khan through the Shevranee country, might prove, among the passes in this quarter, to be of importance to us in any campaign, as there are thence roads of some kind that lead due west into Afghanistan, and that would strike the Cabul road probably at Mukkur, half-way between Khelat-i-Ghilzai and Ghuzni.

North of the Dawar Pass and Bunnoo the Waziri country makes an indenture into the Indian frontier similar to that farther north by the Afridi

tongue of land between Kohat and Peshawar; and twenty-five miles to the north of Bunnoo, with the Waziri territory intervening, lies the small place of Thal, on the banks of the Kurum river. Its importance is that from it there is a pass by that river to Cabul and Ghuzni. Sir H. Lumsden's Mission entered Cabul by this road. So far as the fort of Mahomed Azim,[9] fifty miles, the road is direct and fairly passable. From this place to Habib fort, and thence through the Paiwar Pass, the English Mission in 1857 worked its way by a devious route to Haidarkhel, a village on the Cabul road, a little to the south of Shaikhabad. But there is a shorter road to Cabul than this, which is available during the summer months at all events, and that is by the Shaturgardan Pass, north-west of the Paiwar, which debouches on the places named Lobandi and Zurgonsha, in the immediate vicinity of the capital. By this road the distance from Thal to Cabul is under 150 miles. In order to reach Ghuzni, the road followed by the Lumsden Mission must be taken, turning off near the village of Kushi.

The Khyber Pass, from its Peshawur end, near Jumrood, to its Jellalabad end, at Dakka, is twenty-

[9] Or Kella-i-Kuram. See pp. 59—63.

eight miles long. Excepting the Valley of Lalbeg-gurhee, six miles long and one and a quarter broad, the rest of the Pass, twenty-two miles in length, is completely commanded, and there are few places where an advancing army could find cover. As, in the course of these twenty-two miles, the width of the pass ranges mostly from 100 to 200 yards, and nowhere exceeds 300, and as an Afghan jazail, fired from a rest, will kill at 800 yards, it follows that any troops in the defile with hostile intent would be exposed to a murderous fire. The summit of the pass is near the village of Lundeekhana, nine miles from Dakka. Here the greatest height is reached—2488 feet above sea-level, or 1420 feet above Peshawur, and 1084 feet above Lalpoora, a village close to Dakka. The descent to Dakka is not very abrupt, but the road is contracted between precipitous cliffs, covered with stunted bushes, and the path is rough and stony for the best part of the distance. Beyond Dakka again comes the Kum, or Khoord Khyber, otherwise "the Little Khyber," a gorge three-quarters of a mile long, where two horsemen can scarcely ride abreast. The most important section of the pass, however, is near Ali Musjeed, and it was there that the principal opposition to Sir Claude Wade's advance was made in

July, 1839, to the Sikh auxiliaries in October, and to some British detachments in November of the same year. This section is about a mile and a half long, and is commanded by jaghirs (towers) and sungahs (stone breastworks) at every point. For three miles, from Ali Musjeed towards Jumrood, the pass is from 150 to 200 yards wide, contracting in some parts to 60 or 80. Ali Musjeed itself is perched on a rock 2,433 feet above the sea, or 940 feet below the summit of the Passat Lundeekhana. The fort is about 150 feet long, and 60 feet wide; but the whole of the enclosed space is about 300 by 200 feet. There are three hills within from 200 to 300 yards from the fort, each hill with a fortified post on it. In the centre of the pass, which is here 150 yards wide, is a sungah.

There are various small passes north and south of the Khyber, which strike that pass to the rear of Ali Musjid, and which, if utilized, would isolate the garrison from all support. To make these available for our forces both the Mohmands and the Afridis must be propitiated. Recent travels have thrown considerable light on the Bajour district north of the Cabul River, and it would seem to be quite possible to secure Lalpura, by an advance from our fort of Abazaie by the Inman Pass.

Lalpura is at the Afghan entrance to the Khyber, and a stronghold of the Mohmands. It could only be seized with their approbation, but it is *apropos* to remember that, in 1839, we installed at this place a new ruler, Torabaz Khan, who remained faithful to us through good and ill-fortune. The precedent might prove to be of practical importance.

Having described the chief passes that lead through the Suleiman and Safed Koh, we may glance briefly at those farther west in Cabul itself. Between Quetta and Kandahar there are two ranges of mountains, and the country to be traversed is far from being as easy as some would have us believe. The English army took eighteen days in marching the 150 miles that intervene, although their advance was unresisted. The country is admirably adapted for purposes of defence, and at Haidarzai, Hykulzai, and the Khojak Pass a resolute soldier could easily retard the advance of an invading army. The Khojak Pass through the Amran range is over 7000 feet.

Once we are at Kandahar, the whole of the Afghanistan south of the Hindû Kûsh is at our mercy, for between that city and Cabul there are no passes worthy of the name, although the position on the Maidan hills is very strong. In the direction of

Herat there are several, but these need not be considered here, as Girishk and the Halmand are the limits of the measures proposed to be taken by the Indian Government, unless events become developed in Persia and the Turkoman country.

Of the northern passes through the Hindû Kûsh, the best known is that of Bamian or Sighan. The altitude of this, on the direct road to Khulm and Balkh, is 8500 feet, and the Harakotal Pass at the northern entrance of the Sighan valley is the same. From Bamian another road branches off due west to the Balkh river and Shiborgan, and the heights of the two or three passes here vary from 5000 to 8000 feet. There is a fair road in this direction from Bamian, *viâ* Kilai Jahudi to Shiborgan, and Andchui to Karkhi, the Russo-Bokharan post on the Oxus. The distance from Karkhi to Bamian by this road is only 350 miles, and from Khoja Salih and Kilif the distance is rather less.

East of Bamian there are the following passes leading into the fertile valley of Panjkir:—The Koushan, the Salalang, the Girdshak, and the Khawak. Their altitudes vary from 10,000 to 12,000 feet. The Girdshak, between Kundus, Inderaub, and Cabul, is the most important and the most used. North-eastward of the Khawak are

the Ishkasm and Nuksan Passes, 13,000 feet high, leading from Badakshan and Wakhan to the Chitral valley, and then, continuing along the Hindû Kûsh, we come to the Baroghil, 12,000 feet, leading from Kashgar.

But although these are the names of all the passes we know, it is evident, from the chronicle of our campaign of 1839-40 in these mountains that there are many more—in fact, that between the valleys of northern Afghanistan—and it is nothing but a succession of valleys—there is constant communication by means of passes of all degrees of practicability.

In the western portion of the Hindû Kûsh, viz. the Koh Siah and the Koh-i-Baba—there are passes at frequent intervals, made either by the Halmand or the mountain torrents which rush down to the Heri. In this little-known quarter of Afghanistan, held by Einak and Hazara mountaineers, and the whilom seat of the great Abdali clan, there are several trade routes used by the inhabitants. They all point either to Herat, or southward to Girishk and Candahar, or northward to Maimena and Balkh, Bokhara and Samarcand, the cities of wealth and luxury in the eyes of central Asiatics. And in the low country bordering on the Turkoman desert and

lying north of the mountains of Ghor there is that main road from Herat to Maimena which crosses the Murghab at the village of its name, and which is traced on through all those northern Khanates until it strikes that Little Pamir trade route which passes through Wakhan and Sirikol to Eastern Turkistan and the western cities of China.

At the present time the passes of the Suleiman are of the more immediate importance, but in a political sense, and as matter of fact in a future day, those through the Hindû Kûsh are of as great and lasting importance to us.

The Mountain Tribes.—The hill-men are, in the Ameer's eyes, a weapon of offence against India, and he has threatened to "hurl" them upon our territory. Unfortunately, however, for his Highness's project, the past year has seen a remarkable change in the attitude of the mountaineers. The stern blockade of the Jowakis in 1876-77 has effectually damped their ardour for border disturbance, and since that event the frontiers have enjoyed an exceptional tranquility.[1] In the Hazara district

[1] A despatch relating to the Jowaki campaign was published in the last *Gazette*. The Viceroy thanks the generals and soldiers for their services. The secretary of the Punjab

the minor colonies have all been quiet, while the more important, hitherto so troublesome, have been almost ostentatious in their demonstrations of docility. The Chiggazai, Akazai, and Hassanzai tribes have behaved excellently, and the young chiefs of Agror are quietly at school at Abbotabad. In the Peshawur district the Hassan Kheyl and Pass Afridis, of course, gave trouble, for what else could be expected from races who look upon the murder of relatives as a point of etiquette; but all the other Afridi tribes remained on friendly terms, as did the important section of the Mohmands. With Swat our relations have been undisturbed, and when the Uthman Kheyls committed a gross outrage upon some British subjects, the Akhoond of Swat, the most revered spiritual chief in the Northern Himalayas formally excommunicated them. In the Kohat district there was a serious rupture of the peace. The British government had long desired to construct a cart-road through the Kohat Pass,

government draws attention to the remarkable change effected in border warfare by breechloaders. The result of the campaign proves conclusively that the coercion of any hill tribes is now a matter of comparative ease. Certainly this is an important consideration in the event of our being forced into a war with Afghanistan.

and, though all the other tribes agreed to the proposal, one village obstinately refused to permit the road. Lord Lytton accordingly organized a systematic blockade of the disaffected tribe, and, as their example infected their neighbours, the area of the blockade was extended further and further, until all the troublesome sections of the Jowaki mountaineers were included. So rigorous and so unusual was the procedure that the tribes were soon frightened, and one after the other they came in to tender their submission, to receive the punishment meted out to them, and to construct the road. This policy of blockade is a British innovation in border tactics, and, judged by its results, an excellent one. Since the Jowakis were besieged there has been no disturbance on the frontier, and when, last week, the Mission was refused a passage by the officials of the Ameer, the Khyberis, who actually formed the escort of Major Cavagnari, behaved excellently. The Ameer, therefore, may find the reed he leans on but a weak staff; but, even should his intrigues succeed in spreading fresh disaffection among the now tranquil mountaineers of the Peshawur, Kohat, and Hazara frontiers,[2] we shall not

[2] The following are the chief hill tribes on the north-western frontier:—*Hazara district*—Chiggazais; Akazais; Hassanzais;

find their combined terrors more overwhelming than in years past. Had we to force a way over the Suleiman range, with every height crowded with sharpshooters, the hill-men might, indeed, prove a formidable foe; but by the possession of Quetta we have a commodious entrance to Cabul securely at our command, and may use it to turn the flank of all the mountain tribes. In the open the Mohmands, Afridis, Hassan Kheyls, and the rest are useless, for their tactics are confined to night attacks, or to sudden rushes from ambush upon stray travellers. They have never yet faced ten men together, nor dared to go beyond running distance of their rocks. Like their own hill leopards, they have just audacity enough to drop down in the twilight upon a passer-by, but not the courage to face in the daylight an armed man. But they would be useless when opposed to the Ghoorkas, who, sent to the front in

Phurari Syuds. *Peshawur district*—Hassan Kheyls; Afridis of the Pass and other tribes, as Sipah and Kuki Kheyl Afridis, &c.; Bassi Kheyls; Mohmands; Uthman Kheyls. *Kohat district*—Adam Kheyl Afridis; Jowakis; Orakzais; Waziris. *Bannu district*—Mahsud and Darwesh Kheyls, Waziris. *Dera Ismail Khan district*—Kasranis; Ushteranas; Sheranis; Mahsud Waziris, Bhitanis. *Dera Ghazi Khan District*—Haddianis; Gurchanis; Murris; Bhugtis.

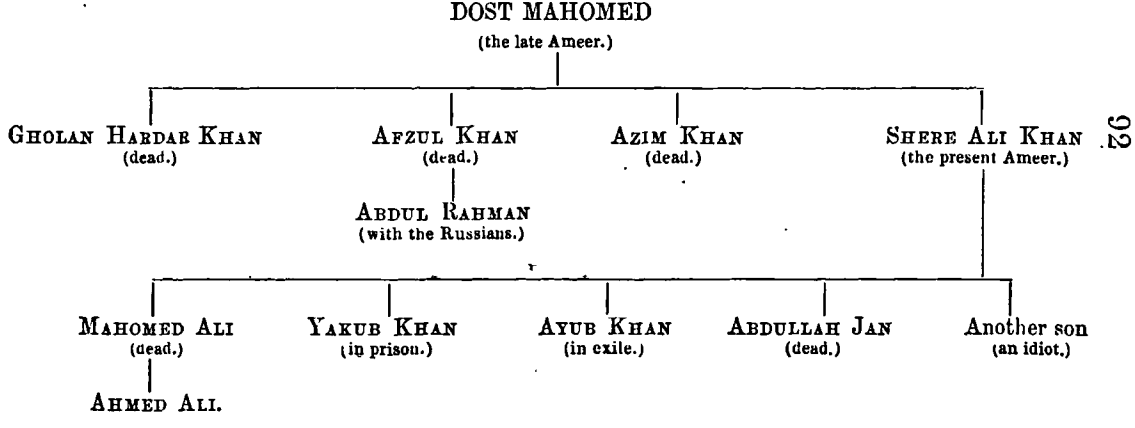
successive drafts, would soon clear out the frontier ravines, and one by one would render stern account of the eyries where the wild mountaineers had entrenched themselves; for the Ghoorkā, who can steal upon a sleeping panther without awaking it, and can out-tire the sturdy sambhur in fair chase, has no equal in the East for mountain warfare. To this day he wonders how the English beat him, hunting him over his own hills of Nepal, and driving him from one end of the wild Kumaoni range to the other; but, though wondering, he never hesitates to express his admiration of the British pluck that wrested his country from him, or to demonstrate his loyalty by claiming to have a share in every fight. Let loose across the Indus, he would fly to the work like a cheetah slipped from his lash at grazing deer, and up and down the Cabul hills would hunt the Afridi soul out of the Ameer's men. Shere Ali, therefore, when he vaunts his power over the hill tribes, and his ability to "hurl" them upon British India "in blasts of fire," as his Highness expressed it, makes an empty boast. The Khyberis are to-day more peacefully disposed towards us than they have ever been since we pushed our frontier up to the foot of their hills. They are an independent tribe, owning allegiance to

none, and willing to sell their services in the best market. For many years they have been anxious to attain the dignity of treaty relations with us, and Lord Lytton, with the same sagacious promptitude that has marked his direction of affairs, is prepared to accede to their wishes. With the hill-men of the Pass in our services, Cabul becomes at once as British as Peshawur.

It is to be noted in connexion with the conduct of Shere Ali and the Afghan frontier question that a necessity has arisen for strengthening the British naval squadron in the Persian Gulf. Between Persia and Afghanistan there exists indeed little love. The attacks heretofore made on Herat and the Seistan dispute have left bad blood behind, and Teheran would never be likely to sympathize much with Cabul. But with Russia behind all these hostile intrigues, and far too influential in Persia, we may need to be strong in the Persian Gulf for other causes than the piracies which are reported there; and it is satisfactory on all accounts to know that a large addition to our force in these important waters will be at once made. This is the third time in history that Russian intrigues in the direc-

tion of Herat have been met by British demonstrations in the Persian Gulf. Let us hope it may be the last, and that England may for the future be so firmly settled in Afghanistan that Herat will be for ever removed beyond the influence of Russian fraud.

THE ROYAL FAMILY OF CABUL.



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